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Sen. Brown helps restore governor's cuts to police posts, training funds and fire investigations

LANSING – State Sen. Cameron S. Brown today led an effort to restore funding for more than \$5 million in Michigan State Police funding that Gov. Jennifer Granholm originally recommended be cut.

House Bill 4307, passed by the Senate earlier today, will provide supplemental funding for the Fiscal Year 2005-2006 budget, specifically restoring funds to the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) and the Fire Investigation Unit, while ensuring State Police posts in Groveland Township, Iron River and Grand Haven will remain open.

“Thanks to this bill, these three communities will continue to have a State Police presence on their roads,” said Brown, chair of the Senate Appropriations State Police Subcommittee. “Public safety is one of the most basic and essential responsibilities of government. This supplemental budget bill reinforces our commitment to that responsibility, even during a time of budget shortfalls and challenging economic conditions.”

The \$1.9 million MCOLES cut recommended by the governor would have jeopardized critical training funds granted to local police departments. With MCOLES grants, police officers take part in state-of-the-art in-service training that keeps them current on critical security issues, including homeland security matters.

“With ever-evolving threats to our homeland, it would irresponsible to slash training funds,” Brown said. “We must make sure our men and women in uniform receive all the information they need to help keep us safe.”

Members of the Michigan State Police Fire Investigation Unit provide assistance to local governments investigating suspicious fires as well as expert witness testimony in arson trials. Because most local units of government do not have their own arson investigation expert, the governor's recommendation to entirely eliminate the program could have resulted in many of the state's suspicious fires going uninvestigated. With \$1.2 million in funding, HB 4307 restores the unit to half of its previous strength.

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